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SUBJECT: LIBERTAS: A ONE HIT WONDER?

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the Irish electorate when they led a successful campaign against the Lisbon Treaty in Ireland's June 2008 referendum. According to independent European political observer, Peadar Kirby, at the Institute of International and European Affairs, the major Irish political parties (all of whom campaigned in favor of the Lisbon Treaty) blame Ganley/Libertas for the Treaty's defeat, but view Ganley/Libertas as nothing more than an opportunistic organization rather than a serious political entity.

17. (C) As reported ref A, Ganley's and Rivada's links to the U.S. have fueled conspiracy theories, such as that neo-conservative factions within the U.S. Government were funding the anti-Lisbon Treaty Movement in an attempt to prevent the emergence of a united Europe that could challenge U.S. power. Ganley and McGuirk denied these conspiracy theories and emphasized that Libertas has not received any funding from Rivada Networks. Libertas denies that it shares the values of American Neo-Conservatives as it "believes in an international order based on respect and cooperation between the free peoples of the world." The organization also claims that allegations of funding by the CIA "is an outright lie and political slur," and that "Declan Ganley, Libertas, or any associate of Libertas have ever received any funding, support or contact of any kind from CIA or any other similar entity." Nevertheless, since Ganley refuses to come clean on how Libertas funded its Lisbon Treaty campaign, the conspiracy theories continue. McGuirk says that Libertas is not willing to publish their donor list because of concerns their donors will get harassed or face undue pressure from the political establishment.

18. (U) Shortly after the Ganley/Libertas victory in the June 2008 referendum, Ganley presented a speech at the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC in which he talks about his belief in the European project, but not through the Lisbon Treaty mechanism because "a constitution in Europe is something that the average 15 year old should be able to read and understand" and is something that every European citizen "must have the opportunity to accept or reject at the ballot box." Ganley further made clear his intention to utilize Libertas to set up shop in all 27 EU member states as a pan-European political party. In November 2008, Ganley hosted a lavish, state-visit-like dinner for visiting Czech President Klaus, which greatly embarrassed the Irish government. The Irish government expressed surprise at Mr. Klaus, attendance at the dinner, suggesting protocol was not being observed, and called Mr. Klaus, behavior inappropriate, particularly since the meeting was ahead of the January 2009 Czech EU presidency. Members of the Irish government were highly critical of the Ganley-Klaus meeting and the Irish Foreign Minister called some of Klaus, views

to be "ridiculous, shallow, and bogus."

¶9. (U) Libertas was officially launched as a pan-European party on 11 December 2008. The Irish Times reported that Libertas is recognized in all 27 EU member states. According to John McGuirk, Libertas, political director, Libertas has not decided whether to mount a second campaign against the second Lisbon Treaty referendum, which is expected to take place in Ireland in October 2009. Most observers here believe that Libertas will play a significant role but only if Libertas does well in Ireland in the June 2009 European Parliament elections.

What Libertas Stands For?

¶10. (C) McGuirk described Libertas as a pro-European, internationalist party despite its anti-Lisbon treaty platform and its alliance with various prominent eurosceptics such as former Danish MEP Jens Peter Bonde and Czech Republic President Vaclav Klaus. He said Libertas opposes the Lisbon Treaty because the treaty does not give Europeans a direct vote and further strengthens the concept of EU law's primacy over Member State law; McGuirk ignored the fact that supremacy of EU law over member states' laws and constitutions has been enshrined in EU case law since the 1960s. According to McGuirk, Libertas supports free trade, a common European defense policy, and is a "conservative" party on social and economic matters. The group, he says, attracts support from moderate, middle class and working class sectors of the population.

¶11. (U) Libertas, own website claims that the organization is a "pan-European movement dedicated to creating a new democratic, accountable and open European Union." It says that it stands for "individual freedom, democracy, and a culture embracing life" and "tolerance and for the belief that every citizen has rights and limitless potential."

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Libertas claims it wants to make Europe more democratic, to provide Europeans with a "referendum on the anti-democratic Lisbon Treaty that the Brussels elites have conspired" to deny them. Libertas wants to "return power where it belongs, to the people."

How to Build a Party 101 -- Europe First, Then Ireland

¶12. (C) McGuirk said that Libertas is not yet an official political party in Ireland. In order to be an official political party, an organization needs to have elected Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), members of the Irish Parliament, or officials of local authorities. Libertas plans to establish itself as a legitimate Irish political party by getting its candidates from Ireland elected to the European Parliament. The party will hold a European conference on March 25, 2009 in Rome to kick off this campaign. They also plan to publish a detailed policy document laying out their platform in March 2009.

¶13. (C) Libertas intends to run candidates in the 27 EU countries. They plan to unveil their list of candidates in March. In Ireland, the group claims to have confirmed candidates in three of the four EU constituencies. McGuirk confirmed that Ganley, himself, will be announcing his candidacy for the European elections in the Connacht-Ulster constituency. Other confirmed candidates for Libertas include solicitor Caroline Simons for Dublin, and Raymond O'Malley for the East Constituency. The group is also attempting to work with incumbent MEP Kathy Sinnott as their fourth candidate or former MEP and Irish music star, Dana Scallan.

¶14. (C) Outside of Ireland, McGuirk claimed Libertas may run Diego Solana, son of Javier Solana, as an MEP candidate for Spain. Mary Gauci, former vice-president of the right-wing Azzjoni Nazzjonali party, is expected to run for Libertas in Malta; and Kevin O'Connell, former deputy director of Europol, plans to run in the U.K. McGuirk also said Libertas is planning to run 10-12 candidates in France, and claimed that recent polls suggested that Libertas, French branch is set to take at least four MEP seats. Phillipe de Villiers, MEP, Christophe Beaudoin and Patrick Louis, from the eurosceptic party Mouvement pour L'France (MFP), have said they would be willing to run under the Libertas banner, according to press reports.

¶15. (C) After the European Parliament elections in June 2009 and the second Lisbon Treaty referendum, Libertas will turn its focus to the 2012 national Irish elections. According to McGuirk, Libertas will not participate in Ireland's 2009 local authority elections because they view Europe-wide elections as the logical first step in building a credible pan-European party. However, Libertas will hold a party conference in Ireland in October 2009.

The EU Stamp of Approval

¶16. (C) Libertas is attempting to obtain formal recognition as a pan-European political party by the European Parliament. Under EU rules, Libertas needed to obtain seven signatures from national or European politicians to be considered a pan-European party. With recognition, Libertas would receive Euro 200,000 (US \$252,000) from the European Parliament and be subject to European Parliament election rules. McGuirk said that Libertas was less concerned about the money and more concerned about the credibility such a designation would bring.

¶17. (C) On February 2, the European Parliament granted Libertas pan-European political status. However, on February 19, that decision was rescinded due to the statements of two signatories to Libertas' recognition document, one each from Estonia and Bulgaria, that they do not support the group. McGuirk alleged that the two politicians backed out due to "undemocratic" pressure from their respective national parties.

Show Me The Money

¶18. (C) According to McGuirk, 10 percent of Libertas, funding is generated from Internet sources while 90 percent of their funding comes from wealthy individuals who share Libertas' political views. Libertas expects to raise Euro 150-200 million for the European Parliament elections, far above Ganley's own estimate of the Euro 75 million minimum necessary to mount a successful campaign. (Note: For the "No" vote campaign on the Lisbon Treaty, Libertas raised

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approximately Euro 1.1 million and spent about Euro 900,000. End note.)

¶19. (C) Libertas has been under some pressure to be more transparent about its funding sources, particularly regarding alleged donations from the U.S. Five of seven founding members of Libertas Ltd. are employees of Rivada Networks LLC and many of Rivada Network's directors are former U.S. military personnel. Rivada Networks LLC provided communications technology to the U.S. military's northern command as well as the National Guard in 16 states, and 3 U.S. federal bureaus. It is alleged that it has over \$200 million in defense contracts in the U.S.

¶20. (U) In response to allegations surrounding Libertas, ability to raise money and mount multi-million Euro campaign

against the Lisbon Treaty in the Irish referendum, the Irish government recently announced revised funding controls initiatives for the second Lisbon referendum. The Irish government intends to cut the amount of maximum donation that any donor can give from Euro 6,500 to Euro 4,000. It will also require the identities of donors who give more than Euro 2,500 rather than Euro 5,000 under existing regulations, and the Standards in Public Office Commission will be granted powers to examine every national political party,s accounts for compliance.

COMMENT

¶21. (C) For Libertas, the outcome of the European Parliamentary elections holds the key to the group's long-term viability as a political player in Ireland and Europe. If a significant number of Libertas candidates are elected to the European Parliament, the group may be emboldened to campaign even harder against the second Lisbon Treaty referendum in Ireland. However, mounting an effective campaign in Ireland on a single referendum is a far cry from successfully electing party members to the European Parliament in a Europe-wide vote. So far, Libertas has not demonstrated that it has the political clout to play in the big leagues.

FAUCHER